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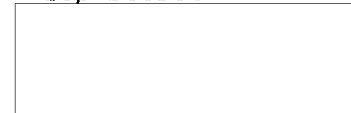
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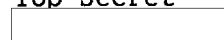
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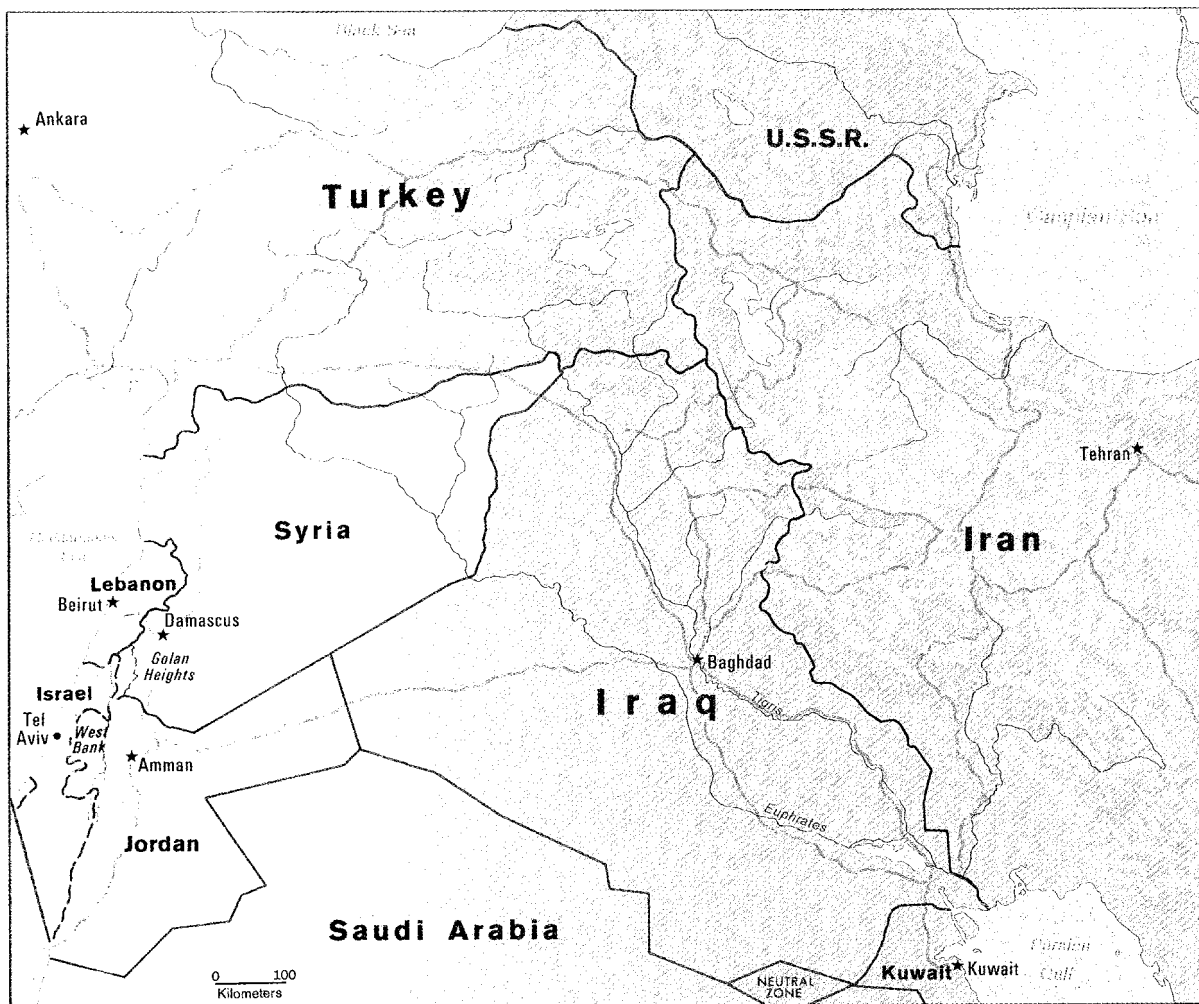


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ALERT MEMORANDUM

SYRIA

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[redacted] Assad's departure could signal the return of an era of chaotic instability and regional isolation that typified Syria's first quarter century of independence. Virtually any successor regime would be initially more nationalistic and hardline, unable to propose or respond effectively to major foreign policy initiatives, particularly negotiations with Israel, until it felt confident of its hold on power. A new regime might also withdraw from Lebanon, raising the prospect of renewed civil war; seek to rally domestic support through limited clashes with Israel; and seek support from the USSR to help offset internal threats. [redacted]

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The recent assassination attempt against Assad underscores his growing vulnerability and is likely to encourage further assassination attempts and increased terrorist attacks against Assad's minority Alawite regime. [redacted]

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[redacted]

In the event of Assad's violent death or overthrow, Syria could easily revert to the pattern of chaotic instability that existed before his assumption of power in 1970. Alawites are in the best position to oust Assad, but the absence of an obvious successor could soon generate a power struggle until a new leader consolidated his position. In any event, a new regime--whether Alawite or Sunni--would be dominated by the military. A Sunni regime might be able to strengthen its position by attaining an accommodation with Muslim Brotherhood extremists. [redacted]

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At the outset, virtually any successor would be more unpredictable, nationalistic, and probably more radical than Assad. This situation would generate

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increased tension with Syria's neighbors, especially Israel. A weak successor might seek a limited military confrontation with Israel--such as air clashes over Lebanon or artillery duels on the Golan Heights--to unite the country, but such confrontations, especially on the Golan, could escalate to wider war. [redacted]

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A post-Assad regime might extricate itself from Lebanon even though a complete withdrawal would increase the risk of renewed civil war there. An unstable leadership probably would not sustain the steady financial drain and corrosive effect on the armed forces without substantially greater Arab financial and military support. A new regime could also fear that keeping a sizable military force outside Syria would increase the likelihood of countercoup plotting within the military. [redacted]

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It is unlikely that a successor regime would moderate Syria's approach to Middle East negotiations. There is no evidence that Assad's Alawite lieutenants, the officer corps, or Syrians in general support the existing peace process. Chronic domestic instability would make it extremely difficult for Syria to moderate its stance toward Israel and to play a constructive role in reaching a comprehensive peace settlement. [redacted]

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The Palestinians would welcome increased room for maneuver as a consequence of instability in Syria. They, and the Jordanians, however, would remain unwilling to enter peace talks under the Camp David framework and would also be unlikely to risk entering negotiations under a new framework until the policies of a successor regime in Syria had been worked out. By virtue of its central geopolitical position, any government in Syria would possess substantial capability to foil unilateral Palestinian or Jordanian peace initiatives. [redacted]

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A change of leadership would at least temporarily increase Syria's isolation in the region and further erode Syrian influence in inter-Arab councils. A weak regime would invite outside meddling in Syrian affairs by those who have done so in the past, notably Iraq. [redacted]

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A new leader in Syria, uncertain of his power base, might seek additional support from the USSR in an attempt to deal with the internal threat. While most successors will want to preserve some ties to the United States in an effort to keep a balance in Syria's relations with the superpowers, all will be compelled to maintain Syria's military supply line to Moscow. Soviet influence in Damascus is likely to increase initially, especially if Syrian-Israeli tensions increase. A new Alawite regime is likely to seek increases in Soviet aid and closer military and security ties but, like Assad, is probably unlikely to request the stationing of Soviet ground forces in Syria. Given Sunni hostility toward Assad's closeness with the Soviet Union, however, a Sunni regime might begin to distance itself from the Soviets and move closer to moderate Arab states. []

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SITUATION REPORT

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IRAN

The release of one hostage yesterday probably does not indicate a fundamental shift in the Iranian negotiating position.

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According to the statement issued by Ayatollah Khomeini's office authorizing the release, the initiative for the move came from the student militants. Press reports indicate that senior government officials have privately indicated that the release does not represent a softening of Iran's attitude toward the hostages.

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Nonetheless, the statement is the first major commentary by Khomeini on the hostage situation since early April and also marks the first time he has overruled his dictum of 23 February that the hostages' fate will be determined by the National Assembly. Khomeini has demonstrated in the past a desire to appear to respond to humanitarian concerns or to try to exploit US public opinion--especially in his decision last November to release the female and black hostages.

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Khomeini and other Iranian leaders probably will closely monitor both US reaction and the domestic Iranian response to the release. If the reaction in Tehran is fairly calm, moderates on the hostage issue could be encouraged to renew negotiations.

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Even if Iran releases some more hostages to improve its image, it is unlikely that this would represent a decisive breakthrough. The hostages remain pawns in Iran's internal power struggle. Only a clear directive from Khomeini could lead to the release of all the hostages; there is no good evidence to suggest he is prepared to end the confrontation with the US.

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In a speech yesterday, Khomeini accused the "great powers" of responsibility for the alleged coup plot foiled this week. Ayatollah Beheshti blamed the US and Israel for the conspiracy.

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BRAZIL: Papal Visit

Pope John Paul II's outspoken support for the poor and his exhortations to Brazil's leaders to correct social and economic imbalances increase the likelihood of serious new strains between the Church and President Figueiredo's government.

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The Pope did not unequivocally side with Brazil's activist clergy against the government during his visit, but many of his public statements will be interpreted by liberal priests as support for their position. His wide-ranging defense of the underprivileged--the central theme of his visit--overshadowed his disavowal of a political role for the church, his insistence on peaceful reforms, and his strong repudiation of Marxist ideology. Even the more conservative clergy may follow the Pontiff's lead and take more forceful stands on social and economic issues.

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Brazil's leaders had hoped for moderation from the Pope and at least his tacit backing for their efforts to restrain church involvement in what they see as temporal issues.

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The regime and the Church most recently clashed over the Church's involvement in a protracted metalworkers strike, but they also have differed repeatedly on issues such as income redistribution and agrarian reform.

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The visit has further raised the expectations of Brazil's underprivileged millions and underscored the poverty that still afflicts the country despite a decade of high economic growth rates. Many domestic critics of the government are likely to view the Pope's remarks as a repudiation of the development model so highly prized by the regime.

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ZIMBABWE - SOUTH AFRICA: Status of Relations

The closure, at Zimbabwe's insistence, of all except the commercial section of the South African mission in Salisbury will add to the concerns of white Zimbabweans but should satisfy for the time being hardliners in the government who have demanded that stern measures be taken against Pretoria. [REDACTED]

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The move brings Zimbabwe's policy toward South Africa into line with that of the OAU. The ouster of the South African representatives, however, probably will not have any significant impact on the mutually profitable economic relationship between Zimbabwe and South Africa. [REDACTED]

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Pretoria apparently was using the mission to recruit a small number of former Rhodesian military personnel for the South African Defense Force, the immediate pretext for closing the mission. There is no evidence, however, to support Prime Minister Mugabe's allegation that the recruits were to be used to subvert neighboring black governments including his own. [REDACTED]

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Despite the political wrangling, neither side is prepared to disrupt its important trade ties with the other. Virtually all of Zimbabwe's exports and imports depend on South African rail and harbor facilities, and Salisbury will continue to remain heavily dependent on South African trade and investment for some time to come. For the foreseeable future, relations between the two countries are likely to be patterned after South Africa's links with Zambia and Mozambique, with whom Pretoria trades extensively without having diplomatic relations. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Civil Defense

[redacted] Soviet plans for urban evacuation for civil defense purposes are less extensive than previously assumed and that a larger portion of the Soviet population would remain in high-risk areas. [redacted]

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Evacuation is a crucial element of the overall Soviet civil defense program because the existing shelter system is estimated to be able to provide protection for only about 15 million people. [redacted]

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[redacted] we now estimate that some 300 cities would be evacuated. [redacted]

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The analysis suggests that population and the presence of facilities for basic industrial production and military materiel manufacture are the most important factors in determining which cities are to be evacuated.

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[redacted] about 90 percent of the population of those cities would be involved--about 85 million evacuees. [redacted]

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Assuming that the Soviets succeeded in implementing their plans for sheltering and for evacuating these 300 cities, we estimate that a US retaliatory attack would result, over the short term, in about 40 million casualties, including some 17 million fatalities. [redacted]

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We had formerly postulated that 75 percent of the population of all cities with more than 25,000 people would be evacuated--about 100 million evacuees from some 900 cities. Under those circumstances a US retaliatory attack would result in about 34 million casualties, including some 12 million fatalities. In a case where the Soviets did not implement any of their civil defense measures, casualties would be about 120 million, including 85 million fatalities. [redacted]

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This assessment of the scope of urban evacuation is based on a study of the characteristics of 69 Soviet cities reported to have evacuation plans and 79 that do not. The analysis of these characteristics for all Soviet cities with a population of 25,000 or more provided a basis for estimating those cities likely to be evacuated and those likely to serve as host areas for evacuees. [redacted]

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DIA Comment

DIA does not concur with the statement that "only some 300 Soviet cities apparently are scheduled for evacuation." DIA believes the evidence to support this judgement is inadequate in that it is based on extrapolations from data on too few cities overall; contains a disproportionately large number of references to towns of 10,000 or fewer inhabitants; relies too heavily on single human source references; and contains insufficient source material reflecting knowledgeability of official evacuation plans or intentions. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Jewish Emigration

Soviet Jews received 1,489 exit permits in June, the lowest monthly total since August 1977. This continues the decline that began last November, a trend that has seen 43 percent fewer visas issued this year than during the same period in 1979. It also represents a sharp drop since May, however, when 2,131 visas were issued. Administrative preoccupation with the Olympics may increasingly be a factor. This impression is reinforced by the way in which emigrants are being given less time than usual to leave the country upon receipt of their permits--sometimes as little as two weeks. Most emigrants must depart before 19 July, the opening day of the Olympics.

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ANGOLA: Cabinet Shakeup

Angolan President Dos Santos reshuffled his cabinet this week in what may be an effort to consolidate his power prior to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola's party congress scheduled for the end of the year. The changes do not appear to have weakened the black nationalist "Catete Group" faction that has been attempting to increase its influence since the death of former President Neto last September. The shakeup, however, may strengthen the position of the moderates and encourage the mulattoes, whose influence has been waning. The most significant change is the promotion to Defense Minister of Pedro Maria Tonha, an influential black moderate. [redacted]

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BOTSWANA: Presidential Successor

The leadership of the dominant Botswana Democratic Party is preparing for the imminent death of President Khama. [redacted]

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[redacted] all members of the Botswana cabinet agreed on Monday to support the nomination of Vice President Masire to be President. This choice reportedly also has been approved by the commanders of the Army and the police and by the President's son, who is deputy Army commander and the leading figure in Botswana's major tribal group. Masire has been groomed by Khama to be his successor and probably will continue Botswana's successful domestic policies as well as its pragmatic, pro-West foreign policies, balancing Botswana's responsibilities as a Frontline State against its economic dependence on South Africa. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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